Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat
FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MAR 14 1945
U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

FRIDAY, July 9, 1943

SUBJECT: "WARTIME WASHING." Information from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

--ooOoo--

Let's talk about the family washing today. Washing has become a wartime problem in many homes lately. Women who never washed more than stockings and underwear...or ironed more than a slip or a handkerchief are now doing the entire family laundry--shirts and sheets...work clothes...towels...everything. Many women who have always before sent everything to commercial laundries are now on their own in front of the washtub.

Commercial laundries in many places have been unable to carry the wartime load of washing and cleaning. People are busier than ever before...are getting clothes dirtier than ever before...need more laundry done. At the same time laundries are suffering from a shortage of labor, especially experienced labor... machinery...materials. That's why so much laundry has come back home, and so many women are asking for information on the best and quickest ways of doing the family wash.

You can read up on this job of washing...inform yourself on every detail of washing and also ironing...by sending for a free bulletin on home laundry published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C. The bulletin is called "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering." It is No.1497. A postcard addressed to the U.S.Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.will bring it to you.

But in the meantime, here are some pointers on summer laundering that may help you do the job more quickly and easily.

To begin with, you'll be wise to go over the clothes and mend and take out

spots before you wash them. A stitch in time is a stitch before washing, for a little hole often comes out of the wash a big hole. And many spots that come out easily before washing maybe set by hot soapy water.

Then consider soaking. Soaking can save you time and labor, and save your clothes a good deal of wear. Soaking loosens dirt...saves rubbing and scrubbing. Always soak clothes in cool or lukewarm soapy water...never hot water, because hot water sets some stains. Then, instead of letting clothes soak for hours or overnight, give them just 15 minutes of soaking. That's enough time to loosen the dirt. Too long soaking in dirty water may darken clothes. Then, remember to soak very dirty clothes separately from slightly soiled clothes. Rub soap on specially dirty places like the collars and cuffs of shirts. Of course, you know that soaking is mostly for white clothes. Never soak colored clothes unless you are absolutely sure the colors are fast.

Keeping white clothes white is one of the problems of washing at home. Careless washing may mean that they come out a greyish color...or yellow...or streaked or spotted. At this time of year you have the help of sunshine in keeping your clothes white. Sunshine is the best of all bleaches and a free gift to every home laundress. But sunshine can't do all the whitening, of course. White clothes need plenty of rinsing...in hot water and soft water, if possible. Rinse and rinse again until the water shows no sign of soapiness. Soap left in white clothes often shows up in brownish streaks or spots...or in an allover dingy look. Hot water does a better job of rinsing than cold water, because cold water hardens soap and makes it difficult to remove.

Usually it is not necessary to boil clothes if you wash and rinse them thoroughly. But if you do boil them, be sure to boil only a short time..no longer than 10 minutes. Too much boiling makes clothes yellow instead of white. Wring the clothes out of the wash water...put them in a boiler of fresh soapy water...add the juice of one or two lemons... and boil no longer than 10 minutes.

Then rinse thoroughly and hang out. Hang white clothes in the full sunshine... colored clothes in the shade.

Now for a couple of tips on ironing. You can save yourself considerable time if you can iron clothes directly from the line. Then you won't have to fold clothes...sprinkle...roll up...and so on. If you can't wash and iron the same day, you can at least roll up clothes directly from the line--take them down when they are slightly damp...just right for ironing...and roll up to keep them that way. If you can't save time this way, here are a couple of points to remember about sprinkling. If you want clothes dampened evenly and in a hurry, sprinkle with warm instead of cold water...and let them stand in a roll about half an hour.

When you iron be sure your iron is hot enough but not too hot. If it "spats" ...gives that snappy sound when you touch it with your wet finger, it's the right temperature for ironing a man's shirt and most other cotton clothes. Keep the iron clean by rubbing it occasionally with wax or paraffin. If starch does happen to stick or "brown on the iron" shake some salt on a piece of paper, and rub the iron back and forth over the salt. Never try to get a hot iron clean with a wet cloth and scouring powder.

Here's a point or two about ironing a man's shirt. Iorn cuffs and sleeves first...then collar...then iron one side of the front...continue around to the back...then, to the other side of the front. And iron up and down with the thread of the goods. Folding shirts after ironing takes time and bothers many a beginner. It's much easier and quicker to hang up shirts, if you have the closet space. Use a wooden hanger because the shirt may get rust spots on a wire hanger.

These are just a few to help you with your wartime laundry problems. You'll find many more in that bulletin on home laundering. Once more it's called "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering", No.1497, and you get it by writing to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.